2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5



192 As may be supposed, the vocabulary of such a barbarous race is very limited. It only contains such phrases as are required to describe the most striking objects of nature, and those which enter into the daily life of the people themselves. So rude and primitive is their dialect that the most ordinary objects and actions of life are described by quaint periphrasis. As, for example, to walk is "to beat (the ground) with hammers"; a child is "a bud"; the grains of rice are "round things"; an elephant is not inappropriately termed "a beast like a mountain"; while the fallow deer of the island (*Axis maculata*) are, with the strictest accuracy, called "spotted animals"; and wild boars, "long-snouted ones."*

They use none of the honorifics so profusely common in Singhalese, the pronoun "*to*," "thou" being alone used, whether they are addressing each other, or those whose position would entitle them to outward respect. They can neither read nor write, nor 212 can I trace the faintest vestige of their ever having possessed any literature, in the lowest sense in which that word can be used.† They count with difficulty on their fingers, and so little notion 802 805 have they of time, that it is difficult to make them understand that they are to keep an engagement at a more remote period than the next day.

I have compared the scant and unsatisfactory collection of 197 words, which I have been able to make, with almost all the vocabularies of the aboriginal tribes of India, published in the *Asiatic Society's Journal*, and though in some of them I have found isolated instances of striking resemblance, these are probably merely accidental. The subject is one which requires further investigation: and a careful examination of the dialect, by any one competent to perform the task, would be interesting, although I question if it would elicit more than we at present know of the origin of the Veddaha.

I append to this paper, as a specimen of their patois, a list of some of their words, distinguishing between those which probably

* It is very curious that the Veddah term for the Ceylon elk, the Samba deer of India (*Rusa Aristotelis*), is "gawra," *vide* Tennent's remarks in his *Natural History of Ceylon*, p. 49, on the tradition of the former existence in Ceylon of the "Bos gaurus" of Hindustan. I have myself heard the "gaur" described by old Kandyans, who have seen it in the mountain forests, as an animal with, as it were, the body of a buffalo and the legs of an elk. And there are many places still bearing the name "gaura," as, for example, besides gaura ellea, mentioned by Tennent, gaura kelle—the forest of the gaur—gaura kanda; and there is a kind of grass called gaura mannia. It is curious that the elk should be called gaura by the Veddahs, and by no one else.

† About ten years ago, the Government established a school for the Veddahs of Bintenne, but it proved a failure.